

**Testimony to the  
House International Relations Committee**

**“The Sale of F-16s to Pakistan”**

**The Honorable Dr. John F. Hillen  
Assistant Secretary of State  
Political Military Affairs**

**July 20, 2006, Time 1:30**

Good afternoon Chairman Hyde, Representative Lantos, and other distinguished members of this Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the proposed sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan.

This sale is a Presidential priority and a key element of the Administration’s South Asia strategy, unveiled in March 2005, aimed at broadening our strategic relationships with our key regional partners – India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

A major pillar of U.S. strategy, as laid out in the QDR, is to shape the choices of countries at the strategic crossroads. Pakistan is one of those countries, and our military-to-military relationship is a key vehicle for shaping Islamabad’s choices.

The sale will send a very clear signal of our commitment to a long-term relationship with Pakistan, a Major Non-NATO Ally since June 2004, and it will strengthen the hand of President Musharraf and his government in supporting us in the war on terror and in continuing to make other, politically difficult, yet strategic choices.

The consultation process with Congress on this F-16 sale has been unprecedented. Never before have such extensive arms sales consultations taken place, in the history of Congressional notifications.

During the past 16 months, we have consulted with Hill staffers on numerous occasions (including two JAVITS briefings), briefed staffers in detail 11 separate times, not including four intelligence briefings, and responded to multiple written questions. We went to extraordinary lengths to respond to the concerns of staffers before submitting the formal notification on June 28, 2006. A larger version of this proposed sale was first included in the March 2005 Javits Report.

By moving forward with the formal notification of this proposed sale in June, the Government of Pakistan (GOP) will be able to complete the sale this calendar year, which reinforces U.S. support for a key ally in the war on terror, quells concerns in Pakistan about U.S. intentions and reliability as a strategic partner, and helps Pakistan avoid significant price increases.

The Administration has carefully considered the potential risks, and we are taking appropriate steps to minimize those risks. Furthermore, the GOP and the Pakistan Air Force have been very cooperative in responding to our concerns on security of the aircraft and technology. In order to discuss this in further detail, we should move into a closed session.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before this Honorable Committee and its Distinguished Membership this afternoon about the proposed sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. I look forward to working with the Congress on this sale, and I am happy to answer any questions.